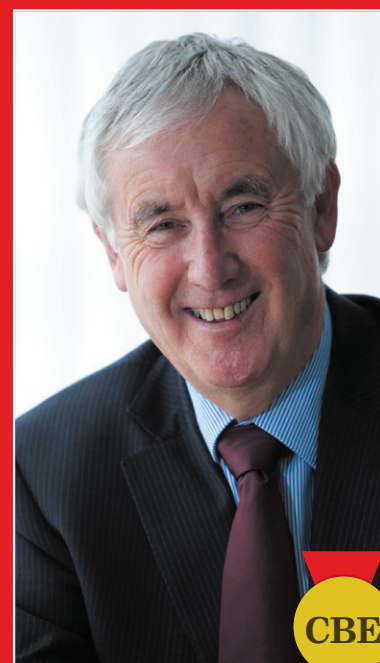


Dame tops New Year Honours list



From left: Christine Braddock, Angela O'Donoghue, John Reilly and Les Walton. See story, page 3

'Alarming' SFA overpayment

Chris Henwood
@Chris_Henwood

Providers were overpaid £91m in the past academic year, the Skills Funding Agency has revealed.

Kim Thorneywork, the agency's chief executive, announced the figure in an official letter saying that "the total amount of learning delivered in the academic year 2011/12 was ... £2,874m. The agency funded £2,965m."

She added that the overpayment meant some providers' allocations for 2012/13 would be reduced, and the agency expected "to deliver a balanced budget for the 2012/13 financial year."

A relaxation of reconciliation rules allowed providers to keep a greater proportion of the funding allocated for learning that was not delivered.

The overpayment has alarmed

Gordon Marsden, the Shadow FE Minister.

"This overpayment of nearly £100m of adult skills funding is particularly alarming, not least given the current pressures that exist on funding across the FE sector," he said.

Learndirect, Newcastle College and South Thames College top the list of overpaid providers.

Learndirect delivered £117,132,144 of education, but was paid a further £5,333,722.

Adrian Beddow, Learndirect spokesperson, said: "This money [overpayment] will be reinvested in the organisation as part of our long-term commitment to further improve the quality of adult skills provision and outcomes for our learners."

Newcastle College received £38,197,511, which is £4,731,682 more than the value of the education it delivered.

A college spokesperson said:

"This is a national issue and most FE providers did not fully meet their contracts, mainly due to a late change in the rules by the agency about who was eligible for fully-funded courses.

"We had the largest contract of any FE provider nationally, so naturally we also had one of the largest surpluses. However, when looked at as a proportion of our contract, the overpayment is 14 per cent, which puts us 44th in the table [based on percentage overpaid].

"Funding rules go both ways, of course, and traditionally we have often ended up subsidising those who don't qualify for free learning at our expense. In the past few years year we have been underpaid more than £7m, providing places even when funding had been exhausted. Just on our 16 to 18 teaching this year, that will cost us around £700,000.

"As a non-profit organisation, any over-provision is invested in new

services, support or facilities for our learners, such as the £42m we spent last year on a new campus for West Lancashire College and the new £24m sixth-form college we are opening this year in Newcastle. This enables us to offer the best facilities for our learners."

South Thames College was paid £19,297,14, which is £2,447,968 more than the value of education it delivered.

A spokesperson said: "Despite the college delivering 98 per cent of the adult SLNs [standard learner numbers] in 2011/12, it achieved some £2.4m less funding for the same volume of work compared with 2010/11.

"The reduced funding resulted from changes introduced by the agency for 2011/12, in particular the changes regarding benefits categories."

See editorial on page 4 and analysis on pages 8 and 9.

Monday, January 7, 2013
www.feweek.co.uk

Peter Roberts interview



Page 5

Campus Round-up



Pages 10 to 13

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Edition 51

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Top #honours tweets:

- 

@157Group
Good to see FE champions in New Year honours list, especially Christine Braddock and Angela O'Donoghue
- 

@NIACEhq
Congratulations to @NIACE_CarolIT for being awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours list for services to adult learning!
- 

@mikehopkinsmc
Great to see FE people so well represented in the NY Honours list. Congratulations to all
- 

@GeorgeLayfield
Good to see education being recognised in honours list. Specially well done FE & HE people
- 

@jim_carley
Congratulations to those in the FE, skills and employment services sector recognised in the New Year Honours List.

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Tesco pulls ad for short courses

Chris Henwood

@Chris_Henwood

Multinational supermarket firm Tesco has pulled its advertising for nine-month apprenticeships following intervention from FE Week.

The company, which boasted revenue of more than £64bn last year, had a posting on its website up until Wednesday, January 2, inviting applications for short-term apprenticeships.

FE Week spotted the advert and questioned Tesco about it.

A spokesperson for the supermarket giant said it was simply “out-of-date”.

“We are in the process of refreshing the apprenticeship content on our careers website for 2013, and this has now been removed while the website is updated,” she said.

In April the government said adult apprenticeships needed to be a year or more “unless it involves the recognition or accreditation of prior learning and an appropriate funding reduction”.

The Tesco advert had been for a level 2 ap-

prenticeship programme and was touted as “an opportunity for people to gain a nationally recognised qualification accredited by City & Guilds”.

“The programme, which takes nine months to complete, will help to improve maths and English skills, broaden your knowledge of different areas of a store and give you an opportunity to earn while you learn,” it said.

However, within hours of FE Week’s query, which included advice that apprenticeships had become “of a 12-month minimum duration”, the advert had been pulled. The message on the firm’s apprenticeship page was replaced with: “More information on our apprenticeship programmes coming soon...”

The spokesperson for Tesco, which was allocated £3,851,914 from the Skills Funding Agency’s adult skills budget for 2012/13 and £461,819 for 16-18 apprenticeships, said the supermarket currently offered 12 apprenticeship programmes “all with a minimum duration of 12 months”.

“Many of our programmes, such as bakery and produce, are longer due to their technical

nature,” she said.

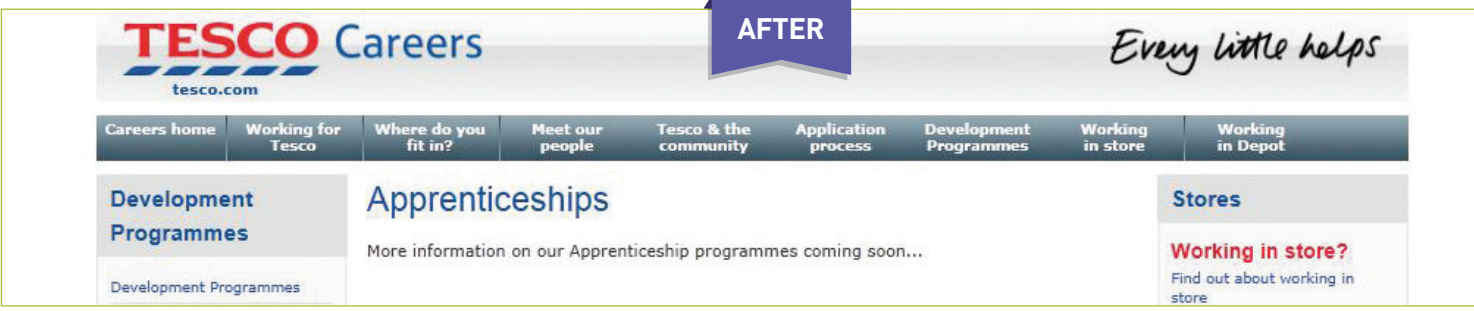
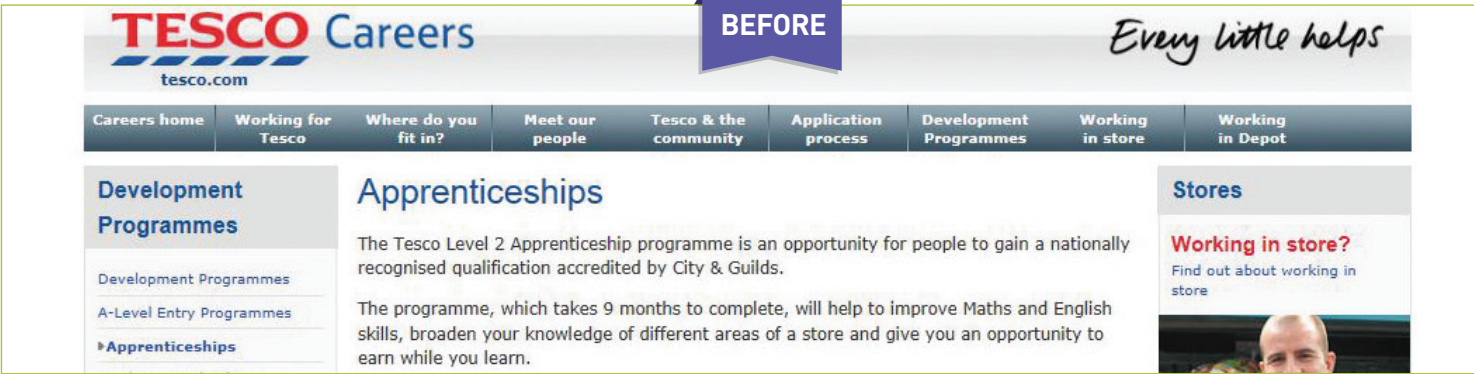
A spokesperson for the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) said: “We are confident the Tesco apprenticeship programme meets all aspects of our quality statement.

“We are working with Tesco, as we do with all employers, to encourage them to offer apprenticeships at a higher level, to review their recruitment practices to attract younger apprentices, and to ensure that all apprenticeships are fully compliant with the quality standards.”

FE Week’s discovery of the nine-month apprenticeship advert comes less than a month after the publication found NAS tweeting a link on its vacancy-matching website for nine-month campsite courier apprenticeships.

The adverts were later removed and NAS told Greenbank Services, both the training provider and employer running the campsite apprenticeships, to stop recruiting as the vacancies “did not meet its quality standard”.

Elaine Bader, recruitment and training manager at Greenbank, said that no apprentices had been signed up since March, which was before the rule came into force.



Youngsters stranded by administration

Chris Henwood

@Chris_Henwood

A London-based social enterprise company that worked with young adults to help them to find jobs has gone into administration.

The Walwyn Trust is believed to have left scores of youngsters unsure of their futures.

Miranda Cook, from Cambridgeshire, contacted FE Week claiming that her 17-year-old daughter, Charlotte, a Walwyn apprentice, was not paid last month.

“None of the young people have had a penny in wages or any idea what will happen to their diplomas, written work, references and, in some cases — although fortunately not my daughter’s — provision of their ongoing training,” she said.

An automated response from the email address of Walwyn, which lists its contact details in Penzance, Cornwall, reads: “Please be advised that Walwyn is in administration.” Ms Cook also said she also had concerns

about the Walwyn’s sister company, Mymar Training, which has a current Skills Funding Agency (SFA) allocation of £4,579,466.

However, a Mymar worker who answered the phone at its Plymouth HQ said Mymar was continuing to trade.

She declined to put FE Week through to management and said no statement would be issued on the situation of the two companies.

A joint statement from the SFA and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) said: “Walwyn Trust is the sister company and employment arm of Mymar Training Limited (who the agency holds a contractual relationship with).

“The agency and NAS have been advised by Mymar that due to new investment they are able to continue to trade.

“The agency and the NAS are working with Mymar to make sure that learners are continuing their learning at Mymar Training. Mymar has reassured the agency that all learners’ wages have been paid.

“The agency and NAS are committed to en-

suring that learners receive their full learning and training and to ensure that all apprenticeships meet statutory quality standards and offer a good experience for apprentices and their employers.”

It added: “Any concerned parents or learners can contact Mymar Training in the first instance or the agency’s email address: mymar@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk.”

Last summer, Walwyn launched a partnership with the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC), providing young people with access to paid, one-year workplace apprenticeships.

An REC spokesperson said: “We have contacted Walwyn and are waiting for a further explanation of their current status and whether they are still delivering their workplace apprenticeships scheme.

“If any of our members have encountered any problems working with Walwyn, we would encourage them to get in touch with us through our inquiry line.”

The REC inquiry line is on 020-7009 2100.

Birmingham principal honoured

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

A college principal “hasn’t quite come to terms with the news” that she is now a dame.

Dr Christine Braddock, principal and chief executive of Birmingham Metropolitan College, was recognised in the 2013 New Year Honours list for services to further education.

She is one of 12 dames on this year’s list and joins the ranks of a rare group of college leaders, including Dame Ruth Silver, chair of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, who was honoured in 2006, and Geoff Hall, the former principal of New College Nottingham, who was knighted last year.

“It’s amazing — absolutely fantastic and incredible for FE to be recognised at this level,” said Dr Braddock, 58.

“When I got the letter I thought just how amazing it was, not just for me but for everyone — the leader gets all the accolades but it’s the team that should get the credit.”

The Lancashire-born principal, who lives in Worcester, has 30 years’ experience in senior leadership of FE colleges. Before that she

worked as a senior education adviser for the Home Office, managing education policy in 43 prisons across the Midlands.

She said she believed she was recognised because her college was “an absolutely integral part of the community”.

“All the work we do is about serving the needs of the community. We are outward facing.”

She was the first president of Birmingham’s Chamber of Commerce from the public sector for 200 years and this year will become the first FE figure to become a High Sheriff when she takes on the role for the West Midlands.

“That shows you how the city of Birmingham sees us,” she said. “We are a facilitator and a sister to the needs of the city — I have seen all aspects of community life and I’m so proud of the individuals I see changing their lives year after year. Some come with nothing and then leave with first-class qualifications, a great achievement for everyone involved.

“That’s why I stay in FE — I still get the same buzz as when I started.”

Dr Braddock, who has three children with husband Tony, is a member of the 157 Group and a council member of Aston University.



Dr Christine Braddock

FE figures awarded CBEs this year include Angela O’Donoghue, principal of South Essex College, John Reilly, principal Mid Cheshire College, and Les Walton, the former principal of Tyne Metropolitan College, which he created after a merger.

Ms O’Donoghue started a sixth-form college from scratch, BSix, in Hackney and worked with the 157 Group raising the profile of international work in colleges.

Honours received for services to education and further education

Christine Braddock, Birmingham Metropolitan College – Dame Commander
Angela O’Donoghue, South Essex College – CBE
John Reilly, Mid Cheshire College – CBE
Les Walton, YPLA – CBE
Ahmed Choonara, NBP – OBE
Theresa Drowley, Redbridge College – OBE
Walker Ewart, Education and training inspectorate – OBE
Jonathan Godfrey, Hereford Sixth Form – OBE
Felicity Greeves, Blackpool Sixth Form College – OBE
Sunaina Mann, NE Surrey College of Technology – OBE
Caroline Neville, formerly SFA – OBE
Moira Tattersall, Carlisle College – OBE
Carol Taylor, NIACE – OBE
Phelim Brady, Farnborough COT – MBE
Peter Brown, formerly Chichester College – MBE
Barbara Evans, Carshalton College – MBE
Andrea Goodwill, Cleveland College of Art and Design – MBE
Barbara Judge, SERC – MBE
Jasper McKinney, Southern Regional College – MBE
Ruth Pickersgill, Leicester College – MBE
Eric Twigger, formerly Hull College – MBE
Patricia Whaley, NIACE – MBE

SFA crackdown finds no subcontractors to list

Chris Henwood

@Chris_Henwood

A promised list of banned subcontractors, due out last November, has no one to go on it.

In August, the Skills Funding Agency said it would produce the list “alongside the register of training organisations” to include subcontractors that the agency refused permission for lead providers to use.

“We will refresh this list each time the register of training organisations is published. Providers will remain on this list until they are listed on the register,” it said.

“If we revoke permission for a lead provider to use a subcontractor, we will add the subcontractor to the list. If we stop funding a lead provider because it is not listed on the register, we will also add it to the list.”

An agency spokesperson said: “We have not published a list as we don’t currently have any subcontractors that we have refused permission for lead providers to use.”

Peter Cobrin, founder and director of Apprenticeships England, said this week that he was surprised the list was empty.

“A quick glance of the register of training organisations suggests the agency has unresolved issues,” he said.

“There is no promised list of ‘organisations (that primes) won’t be permitted to use as a subcontractor’, despite earlier indications that this would happen. The list of names on the register also certainly made me raise an eyebrow.

“If the lack of entries on this list of banned subcontractors was intended to provide reassurance that all is well with every

subcontractor, they need to think again.”

However, an agency spokesperson said it was “in dialogue” with lead providers whose subcontractors would be affected. “The list will be published to the sector in due course.”

In summer 2011, the agency promised to crack down on fraud and the misuse of public money in the FE and skills sector.

The extent of concern was revealed in communications at that time, leaked to *FE Week*, between Geoff Russell, then chief executive of the agency, and John Hayes, former FE Minister.

They revealed that £11m was lost to fraud or misuse in 2010-11, of which only £3m had been accounted for.

Police were involved in nine investigations, Mr Russell said in a letter to the minister that revealed the agency was pursuing 88 new allegations — “a record high” — with a further 17 being investigated by other agencies, including the police.

Meanwhile, the Association of Colleges (AoC) and Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) have been working together on a “more robust approach to the subcontracting process”.

Joy Mercer, AoC director of policy, said: “We have also been working on a common accord that we hope supply chain partnerships will agree to sign.

“AoC and AELP advocate self-regulation and mediation rather than mandatory structures, so it is important to have a solid framework for a code of conduct that enables providers and sub-contractors to ensure value for money while maintaining high standards of delivery to the benefit of students.”

FE WEEK MINISTERIAL WEBINAR

As part of a month of engagement with the FE sector and employers, the Minister for Skills, Matthew Hancock, wants to hear from you.

You are invited to join the Minister on an exclusive webinar, to hear his thoughts on skills and FE, and the launch of a discussion paper in which he will set out new plans to help young people compete in the labour market.

THURSDAY 10 JAN
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*Editor's comment***The £91m lesson**

Providers were always going to under-deliver in the 2011/12 academic year.

For example, as rightly described by South Thames College, significant changes to fee eligibility policy made achieving funding allocations impossible.

What we now know, and what wasn't inevitable, is that the SFA has authorised £91m in overpayments

By design or not, this will help the SFA in its aim to balance its budget for the 2012/13 financial year.

No one, perhaps other than those who have received them, should be happy about these overpayments.

How can it be right, for example, that a provider allocation is increased by more than £1m during the year, then they fail to deliver courses to earn the extra funding, and yet it still keeps nearly all of it?

You've got to feel for providers who turned down allocation increases for fear of being unable to earn and therefore keep it.

I'm not blaming providers who under-delivered given this was a consequence of poor and under-researched policy-making on the part of government.

If there is anything to be learned from this, it's not that under-delivery pays, it's that the government needs to listen to the sector when it warns about how policies will play out.

Nick Linford, editor

Correction

The missing out of college names in our ever-popular campus round-up section appears a worryingly persistent issue.

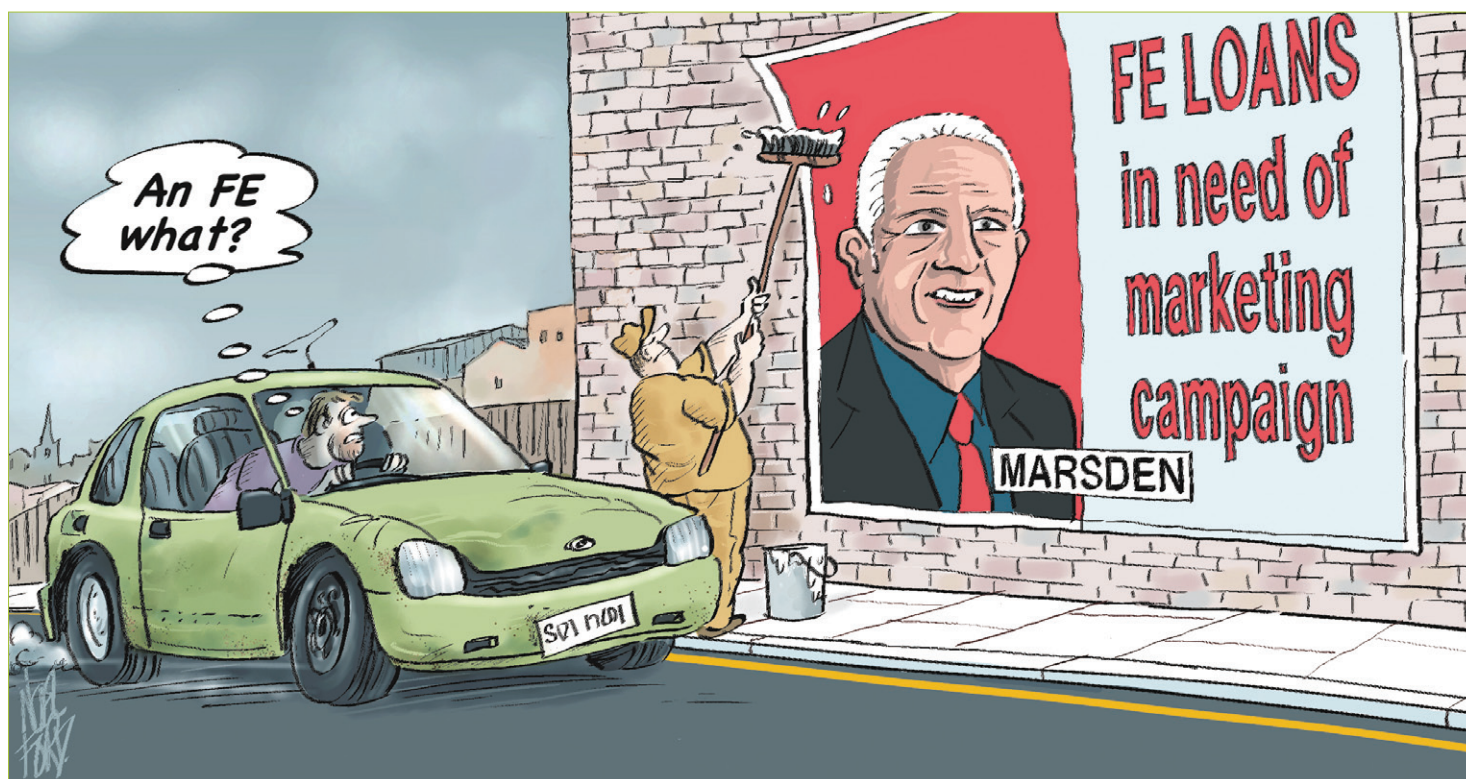
But never let it be said that we're happy to paint over the cracks, so we're holding our hands up to another instance that appeared in the last print edition.

And apprentice painter Jamie Irvin, who had been taken on as a permanent member of his beloved Aston Villa's off-the-pitch staff, could well tear a strip off the *FE Week* team after we failed to say he was also a Walsall College student.

In the last edition we promised to brush up on our geography following an error. Would it be too much to say we will now brush up on our painter stories?

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week*?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.

**Limited marketing 'potentially disastrous'**

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

A shadow minister has said that the lack of a "proper" national marketing budget to inform mature students of a new loans system is "potentially disastrous".

Gordon Marsden, the FE shadow minister, was talking to *FE Week* after the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) announced a £6.5m local communications and marketing budget to publicise 24-plus advanced learning loans.

While many FE courses for the over-24s are currently subsidised by up to 50 per cent, from next autumn the government plans to scrap this financial support and introduce loans to cover the cost of level 3 (A-level equivalent) and level 4 (foundation degree or HND equivalent) courses.

"It is simply unacceptable that there will

be no proper marketing budget for loans," Mr Marsden told *FE Week*.

"This is the biggest change to FE funding in a generation. The fact that the government will not be communicating these major changes effectively to learners is deeply worrying, potentially disastrous."

He pointed to BIS's own market research that showed only 11 per cent of learners surveyed would have taken their course if FE loans had been in operation.

"This could have serious implications for participation numbers, threatening course viability across countless colleges. Matthew Hancock and his BIS officials need to fight this corner with their Cabinet Office colleagues urgently," he said.

But a BIS spokesperson told *FE Week* that "in light" of the "relatively small numbers" of students involved for the first year of the change, the department didn't feel a national marketing budget was needed.

"We feel it is best to concentrate on local channels, and make information and materials available nationally that can be tailored to meet local need," said the spokesperson.

"Funding is to help colleges and training organisations prepare for the introduction of loans, including making sure learners have the information they need to make applications from April. This could include a range of local marketing building on the national materials already available."

The new marketing budget was announced in the Skills Funding Agency's recent online update: "The agency has received an additional £6.5m to help providers prepare for the delivery of loans for 2013/14. Further information on this will be emailed separately to those providers in scope to receive the fund."

BIS said the funds would come from money held by the department for the set-up of the loans system.

Comments**Camping courier apprenticeships get short shrift**

Absolutely ridiculous. An apprenticeship should be three years minimum and apprentices should be studying one day a week at college for a recognised qualification. The various agencies and government are NOT managing things correctly. What next? Apprentice potato picker, apprenticeship in street cleaning?

FE Lecturer

Apprenticeships in street cleaning have been available for some time now.

letmeinplease

Landmark decision on under-16s

This really is a fantastic decision for young

people. By allowing FE colleges to enrol 14-year olds directly, the choice for youngsters has been significantly increased. After a distinguished career in which Lord Baker continues to make his mark, he discredits himself by his ill informed and generalised remarks.

Mike Hopkins

It provides schools with an excellent way of "dumping" their least able pupils on their local FE Colleges and thus protect their league table "status". The whole IAG issue remains a major challenge. Choice is great, choice without guidance is foolish.

We need to consider whether the whole question of developing alternative pathways that commence at age 14 for all pupils is being addressed, or sidestepped by this proposal.

Peter Cobrin

Have you got something to say about FE or one of our stories?

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Or, you can write to us at *FE Week*, 161-165 Greenwich High Road, London SE10 8JA.

Full contact details should be provided and can be withheld by *FE Week* upon request.

FE Week profile

Peter Roberts ~ his story

Holly Welham

@hollywelham

The principal of Leeds City College talks to FE Week

Peter Roberts was happily following in his father’s footsteps as a professional footballer when a nasty tackle threw him off course. His dad, Harold, made history at Chesterfield FC when he was signed by Birmingham City for a then record £10,600.

Peter also joined Chesterfield in his teens. But his time on the pitch came to an abrupt halt in his early twenties when he broke his leg twice and was told that he needed to think of a new career.

“I’d never seen my life as anything other than playing football. I’d always been reasonably good and once I’d joined Chesterfield as a schoolboy I didn’t entertain doing anything else,” the former midfielder says.

“It was hard when I broke my leg. But there’s no point moping, you’ve got to get on. And because I was waiting and waiting for my leg to heal, it was a slow realisation that I wouldn’t be able to play professionally again, rather than a moment when it all came tumbling down. When life deals you certain cards you have to cope, you can’t feel sorry for yourself.”

Becoming a PE teacher seemed a good next step and he applied to do a PGCE at the University of Liverpool, where he had completed a degree in economics while he had been at Chesterfield. But it wasn’t the most practical of decisions.

“I did my whole teaching practice with my leg in plaster,” he says. “It was meant to heal by the end of the first term, but never did, so I spent my time refereeing and hobbling about in the gym. You wouldn’t get away with it now.”

When he graduated in 1978, he taught PE and economics at West Derby comprehensive in Liverpool. He was also back in his football boots playing part-time for Southport, a non-league side.

“Life changed a lot in a few years, from having my future clearly mapped out to suddenly everything becoming uncertain. But I ended up in a place where I could play football to a reasonable standard and teach — I got the best of both worlds,” he says.

“I still harboured some thoughts about playing professionally, but I enjoyed teaching. Hindsight is a wonderful thing; if it had happened a few years later then it would have been a lot harder, but I was still young and open to new things.”

Roberts, who in December was elected chair of the 157 Group, which represents the top colleges in the country, grew up in Chesterfield with his older brother Alan. Dorothy, his mother, was a clerk in the finance department at a local newspaper; after his retirement from football, Harold,

who died in 2007, coached young players at Chesterfield..

“I saw two quite different sides of life growing up,” Roberts says. “I went to a grammar school where higher education was the main route people took, but in the football team it was another story. I hate hierarchy, the idea that some people are better than others. Some of the players in the team weren’t academic, but put them on a football pitch and they’ll see things no one else ever will. Everyone brings different skills to the playing field. I hate snobbery and, as I get older, I get more intolerant of people trying to impose hierarchy.”

Roberts, now 57 and the father of two (he has been married for 31 years), decided to go into further education when he was at West Derby and was asked to run a business course with a local college. He left the school in 1983 to become a lecturer in leisure and recreation at Stannington College in Sheffield.

“I hate hierarchy, the idea that some people are better than others”

“My decision wasn’t based on very good reasons,” he says, laughing. “I was attracted by having my own desk, dedicated non-teaching time to plan lessons and paid overtime. You never got any of that in schools. It seemed a much more grown-up and sensible world.”

When he began teaching at the college he found he enjoyed being in a more job-focused environment.

“I could really see the impact we were having,” he says. “In the area a lot of steel workers were losing their jobs and the government paid for them to do courses at the college. Being able to help them get back into work was very rewarding.”

After four years at Stannington, he moved to Selby College as part of the senior management team. In 1992 he became vice-principal of Rotherham Sixth Form College and later York College.

In 1997 he moved as principal to Stockport College — and in six years helped to turn it around from being judged by Ofsted as inadequate to being awarded outstanding.

“It even makes me emotional now,” he says. “Once Ofsted had gone, we got all the staff together to tell them the grade and I asked how many of them had been at the college when it was judged inadequate — loads of hands went up. You’ve got to believe in people and make sure they know it’s OK to ask for help.

“It was a fantastic feeling. After all the usual celebratory stuff I went back to my



office . . . the relief was palpable. You just think ‘wow’. We had all worked so incredibly hard.”

Roberts joined Leeds City College in 2009, just after its merger with two other institutions to form one of the biggest colleges in the country — it has an annual turnover of more than £90 million, 1,700 staff and 40,000 students. In May this year Ofsted gave it a “good”, with its report calling the principal “inspirational”.

“Everybody has good and bad days, but it’s a nice confirmation of all the hard work we’ve been doing,” he says. “These two inspection results are my proudest achievements.”

He now admits that every morning before Ofsted arrived he would play the anthem for Liverpool Football Club.

“All the staff were laughing at me, but I just needed to get my fix,” he says smiling. “My dad was a Scouser, he brought me up as a Liverpool supporter and the words are something I hold very dear. It sums up my outlook on life and how you cope when

stuff gets chucked at you — when you walk through a storm hold your head up high... walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart.”

It’s a personal thing

What’s your favourite book?

The Partner by John Grisham

What did you want to be when you were younger?

A footballer

What do you do to switch off from work?

A variety of interests, including sport, reading and travel

If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?

Bill Shankly

What would your super power be?

The ability to add a few more hours to the day

FE Week Experts

Trust me: shared services can work



It's early days – and flexibility is essential – but a unique partnership of six FE colleges is determined to bring down costs and improve the service to students, says Alex Richards

Some people worry about the potential pitfalls of shared services. Others see it as an opportunity to push innovative thinking to its limits. But collaborative working demands exploration, especially when cost reduction remains vital to the financial survival of many FE providers.

After a year of talks, Totton College joined five other sixth-form colleges to become The Solent Colleges Innovation Partnership. Supported by funding from the Association of Colleges (AoC), it is the first (and only) partnership in the country to be made up solely of sixth-form colleges.

Initially created by the six principals, the partnership has the support of each college's governing body. Geographically the six are close – three (Portsmouth College, St Vincent and Havant) are around the Portsmouth area and three (Richard Taunton Sixth-Form College, Itchen and Totton) around Southampton. This makes meetings easy and yet the distance is enough to ensure competition for students is at a fairly low level.

It is inevitable that there will be some overlap in competing areas of provision, but we all believe that by working together we can cut costs and improve the service to students.

The starting point in a project such as this is to learn to trust one another. To this end, we have established clear protocols to work through any issues that might arise.

From the start, we found that we often shared the same challenges; we now hope that we will all benefit from a common approach where we can. Instead of six colleges spending 10 hours each working on the same business process, two colleges might spend 15 hours developing a procedure that eve-

ryone can use. At the moment, for example, we're exploring attendance tracking, value added and the introduction of new reporting technologies.

We learnt early on that it's difficult to expect any college to give up an existing process or system that works well for them. Instead we are focusing on 'green field' activities – developing new systems and processes where all or most of the colleges in the group identify a shared gap. Conversely, there are some areas of current practice that we all are unhappy with and so we'll collaborate on developing improved common systems.

A 'development day' at the start of the project brought senior teams together to build a good understanding of shared goals. The result was the formation of a number of sub-groups, including curriculum, finance, support for learning and HR. Five of the colleges use the same UNIT-e management information system and so an MIS sub-group was also formed, which I currently chair.

As we began looking at how we could use our MIS to work together, we realised that despite having the same systems, we use them differently. For example, one college may call a group of students a class and another a course, with different structures describing them on their database. That means that a report sent from one college's system to another will have different coding assumptions, and won't translate properly.

“Despite having the same systems, we use them differently”

We are now identifying these differences to see if we can find ways to bring things together while still giving each of us the freedom to meet our local needs; this will allow us to continue to work with different data but on equivalent systems.

One important aspect has been to allow each of us to decide our own systems and processes. It is inevitable that some projects will be shared with all of the group, while others might pull in one or two. This flexibility is crucial. Collaborative working must achieve the best possible solutions, as well as save time and money.

Despite being in the early stages, we have high expectations of what we will be able to achieve by working jointly. There is a lot riding on this partnership – for us and the many other colleges who may follow our example.

For more information, please visit www.totton.ac.uk or www.capitafhe.co.uk

Alex Richards is assistant principal, college services, at Totton College

The real case for chartered colleges

Chartered status must not simply be another quality mark: it should reflect the capacity of an institution to work with all its partners to help to shape what is on offer to its community, says Mick Fletcher

The proposal to develop chartered colleges offers the prospect of underpinning the freedoms and flexibilities that government seems to want for FE, and of signalling a distinct and valued status for FE institutions comparable with HE. But the consultation on the proposal risks vitiating the whole agenda.

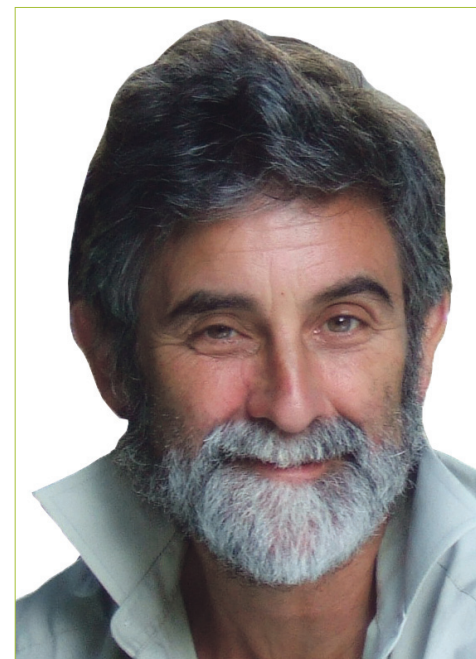
The core confusion is that the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) seems to see chartered status as another quality mark. Chartered status would be awarded to institutions that score well on a range of indicators, some already in existence and others yet to be invented. The consultation seeks views on which ones. It is doubtful, though, whether the sector itself or those it seeks to serve would benefit from yet another quality indicator; it could become another logo to gather dust in the lobby.

Chartered status should be about something else; about trusting an institution to do the right things, not just to do what it does well. In specific terms it should reflect the fact that an institution can demonstrate genuine accountability to a range of internal and external stakeholders so that it can be trusted to determine what programmes it should offer, where and to whom. It should reflect the fact that the institution's internal processes demonstrate integrity in designing its offer, in recruiting its students and reporting their achievement.

“Chartered status should be about trusting an institution to do the right things”

In this context the idea that local education partnerships (LEPs) should 'sign off' applications for chartered status is profoundly misconceived. LEPs are important partners, but only one of a range of stakeholders whose interests need to be reflected in college plans. Real local accountability is not achieved privileging the views of one actor amongst many.

It is probable that well-run colleges will deliver high quality and demonstrate genuine accountability, but the two are not the same and the one does not follow from the other. Outstanding success rates are no guarantee that an institution is highly responsive to the communities it ought to serve, nor indeed



that it plans provision and recruits with integrity. A deep and genuine understanding of local need should not be discounted because of a weakness in some areas of delivery.

The confusion in BIS builds on a more widespread confusion in Whitehall that allowing a degree of local autonomy is a reward for good behaviour, not an outcome in itself with benefits for communities. We need institutions that are committed to researching local needs, and to explaining themselves and their performance to their full range of stakeholders.

The beneficiaries are local employers and communities, not college staff. This is why the Colleges in the Community report called for much greater scope for colleges to determine what they offer; it was why the Lingfield Review argued for colleges to have greater control over the qualifications they deliver.

Chartered status should reflect the capacity of an institution to work with the full range of partners to help to shape the local offer. It could provide the rationale for funding via grant-in-aid rather than by contract; and it should be accompanied by substantial freedom for a college to develop and deliver its own programme rather than choose from a central menu. Most colleges should achieve the status despite differences in quality, much like HE.

But chartered status will not be appropriate for many training providers, despite their excellent work. A for-profit training company, for example, has to be accountable to its shareholders, not its community. There may be good grounds for recognising the excellence of its training if it is felt that the Ofsted grading is inadequate, but a different word should be chosen – 'licensed' or 'accredited' training provider for example; and it should continue to be funded by contract. If training providers were to become chartered, which should not be ruled out, they would have to look a lot more like FE colleges.

Mick Fletcher is an FE consultant

FE Week Experts

Why it's time for a vocational pedagogy

A new report highlights the complex task of the vocational teacher and offers important evidence for why FE needs a vocational pedagogy, says Charlynn Pullen

This is a critical time for the UK economy. As it begins to recover, there will be a greater need for skilled individuals, and vocational education has a clear role to play. But for years, vocational education has been derided or ignored, quality has been questioned, and funding cut.

We believe vocational education needs to be high-status and valued, and for that, we need high quality teaching. Matthew Hancock, Minister for Skills, agrees. In his speech to the Association of Colleges' conference on November 20 last year, he said: "There is no reason set in stone why technical education should not be seen as on a par with or even more virtuous than university... It will come only when teaching in FE is uniformly high quality... Outstanding education is the route to outstanding acclaim."

Industries such as care and retail will grow this century; we must better value both as at present low skills, low pay and low status are endemic in both.

People working in these and other vocational sectors need the routine expertise to deal

with everyday problems; the resourcefulness to solve trickier problems; the functional literacies to explain their solutions to customers; the business-like attitudes to do so in a way that values the customer; the craftsman's desire to do a job well; and the wider skills for growth to innovate for future solutions.

"Low skills, low pay and low status are endemic in both the care and retail industries"

These six outcomes of vocational education are set out in 'How to teach vocational education: A theory of vocational pedagogy', a newly published research report (written by Professors Bill Lucas, Guy Claxton and Dr Ellen Spencer at the Centre for Real World Learning at the University of Winchester) from the City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development.

We argue that these outcomes are what employers and customers value. If employers value these outcomes, and demand better skilled individuals who have acquired them, then it is on this basis that an economy can grow. So how do we get there?

Clearly, high quality teaching is key. However, we believe that the role of vocational pedagogy in attaining that quality has been underestimated. The report highlights the complex task of the vocational teacher and offers important evidence for why we need a vocational pedagogy.

It also offers a model for vocational teaching that we believe practitioners will find useful, but there are elements which need to be discussed.

For example, if a vocational teacher needs to think carefully about the kind of teaching he or she can use in a workshop versus a classroom, what happens in a workplace?

How can vocational teachers, or indeed those without training in teaching, provide support to learners in a workplace, and what training is needed to support that? What about the role of the assessor?

Previously, the learning and skills sector has talked about the need for a vocational pedagogy but struggled to develop one that everyone agrees to. We believe our outcomes clearly set out what vocational education is



for, and offers a framework. Now it's time to discuss how we can develop a vocational pedagogy that is owned by the sector, rather than one that's borrowed from general education.

To find out more about the project or to download a copy of the report, visit www.skillsdevelopment.org

Charlynn Pullen is a senior researcher at the City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development

Will 'guilding' the LSIS be an improvement or disaster?

Stop tinkering with FE before another doomed organisation is set up (you only have to look back a few years), says Anne Nicholls

And so, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) is to close this August after barely four years, as plans for an FE Guild are put together. David Hughes, chair of the guild's steering group, has enthusiastically argued the need for a new organisation to unite the learning and skills sector. But many people with long memories are rolling their eyes and saying: "Not another one."

Let's look at the development of some of these sector organisations. The saga reads like a Restoration farce, full of divorces and remarriages, plus a few births.

LSIS was formed from a "marriage" between the Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA) and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, which had been created by the Learning and Skills Development Agency, which was split into two in 2006 - one part becoming the QIA (which then morphed into LSIS) and the other the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) ... if you follow my drift.

The story started in 1995 when the Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) was set up as a merger between the Further Education Unit and the Staff College - a seemingly perfect marriage.

But the relationship went pear shaped in 1997 when FEDA got into financial difficul-

ties. In stepped Chris Hughes as the new chief executive and in 2000 FEDA acquired a new name, the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA). Hughes got the organisation back into solvency with a strategy of winning big government-led contracts.

I joined the LSDA in 2001 as communications manager. It was an organisation that combined policy and practice, and had people who really understood how to make policies work and how to engage with practitioners such as teachers, trainers and lecturers.

"Cynics are talking about 'a camel looking for a desert'"

But in 2005 the Department for Education and Skills decided that the "quality landscape" needed rationalising with a new organisation. They wanted the LSDA to carry this forward ... the only problem was they wanted a divorce. In other words, they wanted to separate commissioning from delivery.

So in 2006 the LSDA was split in two. One part - the QIA - became a quango and was, literally, sent to Coventry with a new chief executive. It lasted just over two years amid

murmurs that it was too removed from what was happening on the ground and had failed to win the confidence of people working in the sector.

The rest became the LSN, an independent charity focusing on delivering services to the sector and beyond. That organisation went into administration in November 2011, a consequence of losing large government contracts in the wake of public sector cuts.

Now we have yet another organisation, the brainchild of former Skills Minister John Hayes. Cynics are talking about "a camel looking for a desert". Others see it as a cost-cutting exercise. The more positive voices see an opportunity for the sector to take charge of its own destiny.

The new guild's functions are likely to include setting professional standards and codes of behaviour, developing qualifications for those working in the sector, supporting training and strategic planning - tasks that are already being done by other organisations, including the LSIS.

How will it be funded? Will the £48 million from the LSIS budget be transferred, or will it go back into the government's coffers? Will there be a levy from colleges and training providers? Why is it being called a guild?

A round of consultations is planned this year. If the feedback is positive, the aim is to get things up and running by the summer. Many feel that it is a fait accompli.

Further education has had a poor marital record with organisations lasting, on average, about four years. What's proposed could



be a disastrous ménage à trois (or quatre) between existing bodies. Maybe the movers and shakers should stop tinkering before yet another doomed "marriage" takes place.

Anne Nicholls is a PR/communications consultant and journalist specialising in post-16 education and training. She was communications manager at the LSDA from 2001-2006

Adult allocations and overpayments for 2011/12

Here we publish details of the Skills Funding Agency allocations and final end-of-year performance position for colleges and training organisations for the academic year 2011/12. The table opposite is ordered by the size of the cash overpayment, and includes all providers overpaid by £500,000 or more. Typically, independent training providers are not eligible for overpayments.

The Skills Funding Agency letter in full

Skills Funding Agency

Final end-of-year performance position for colleges and training organisations for the academic year 2011/12

Today, I am publishing the final end-of-year performance position for colleges and training organisations for the academic year 2011/12. This is only possible because of colleges' and training organisations' prompt final submission of their Individualised Learning Record (ILR) and final claims. Thank you for this.

In publishing this data for the first time, the Agency is taking the next step in ensuring that its processes and systems are transparent. This contributes to the "open government" agenda.

These figures confirm that the further education (FE) sector continues to ensure that government funding benefits learners and employers.

For simplicity, we have included all programme delivery within these final figures, including:

- Adult Skills Budget
- Additional Learning Support
- Formal First Step
- Discretionary Learner Support
- Adult Safeguarded Learning

In publishing this data we are presenting an accurate and full picture of the performance of the FE sector in 2011/12. These figures show that the total amount of learning delivered in the academic year 2011/12 was funded at £2,874 million. The Agency funded £2,965 million.

The difference of £91 million, or 3 per cent, has already been reallocated to the FE sector.

We have delivered this reallocation by using our Reconciliation Update for Adult Skills Budget Providers for the Year Ending 2011/12. We have reallocated any 2011/12 underperformance and for some reduced their 2012/13 allocations. This ensures funding continues to follow the demand from employers and local communities, and enables the Agency to confirm that we expect to deliver a balanced budget for the 2012-13 financial year.

The position for each college and training organisation is available on the Our Programmes section of our website. All figures reflect the claims that each college and training organisation has made and the amounts that the Agency has paid using published performance management rules.

Yours sincerely, Kim Thorneywork, Chief Executive (Interim) – Skills Funding

Comment from three providers with highest cash overpayment



A spokesperson for learndirect, Adrian Beddow, said: "The SFA funding policy means those providers whose actual delivery fell within a certain range of their allocated funding would not be subject to full clawback.

"For learndirect this equates to around 4 per cent of the funding allocated. This money will be re-invested in the organisation as part of our long-term commitment to further improve the quality of adult skills provision in the UK and outcomes for our learners."



A spokesperson for NCG (formerly Newcastle College Group) said: "This is a national issue and most FE providers did not fully meet their contracts, mainly due to a late change in the rules by the SFA about who was eligible for fully funded free courses.

"We had the largest contract of any FE provider nationally, so naturally we also had one of the largest surpluses. However, when looked at as a proportion of our contract, the overpayment is 14 per cent, which puts us 44th in the table.

"The key reason for this is that initially only people on two kinds of benefit qualified for free courses – just a third of the number of those eligible compared with the previous year.

"This decision was later reversed by the SFA but by then some courses had already started and many potential learners had decided not to apply because they didn't think they would get free courses.

"Funding rules go both ways, of course, and traditionally we have often ended up subsidising those who don't qualify for free learning at our expense. In the past few years year we have been underpaid more than £7 million providing places even when funding had been exhausted. Just on our 16-18 teaching this year that will cost us around £700,000.

"As a non-profit organisation, any over-provision we get is invested into new services, support or facilities for our learners, such as the £42 million we spent last year on a new campus for West Lancashire College and the new £24m sixth-form college we are opening this year in Newcastle. This enables us to offer the very best facilities for our learners."



A spokesperson for South Thames College said: "We are disappointed with funding income achieved in 2011/12. Despite the college delivering 98 per cent of the adult Standard Learner Numbers (SLNs) in 2011/12, it achieved some £2.4m less funding for the same volume of work (compared to 2010/11).

"Therefore the college performed within the 3 per cent tolerance in terms of delivery but received significantly less funding. The reduced funding position resulted from changes to the funding rates introduced by the SFA for 2011/12, in particular the changes to funding regarding benefits categories.

"As a region, the national data shows that London was particularly adversely impacted with some 26 out of 31 FE colleges achieving a lower funding income than allocated; a total reduction of £15m appears to have resulted from these changes regionally."

Key	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Provider	First allocation (August '11)	In-year allocation increase or decrease	Final allocation (June '12)	Adult Skills Final Total Delivered	Delivered less allocated	Adult Skills Final Total Funded	Overpaid £	Overpaid %
LEARNDIRECT LIMITED	£121,215,789	£3,200,908	£124,416,697	£117,132,144	-£7,284,553	£122,465,866	£5,333,722	4%
NEWCASTLE COLLEGE	£39,685,595	£2,212,189	£41,897,784	£33,465,829	-£8,431,955	£38,197,511	£4,731,682	12%
SOUTH THAMES COLLEGE	£19,464,350	£388,275	£19,852,625	£16,849,173	-£3,003,452	£19,297,141	£2,447,968	13%
SOUTHWARK COLLEGE	£9,310,239	£10,245	£9,320,484	£7,184,525	-£2,135,959	£9,386,395	£2,201,870	23%
STOKE ON TRENT COLLEGE	£17,154,326	-£582,262	£16,572,064	£13,011,502	-£3,560,562	£14,511,149	£1,499,647	10%
SOUTH AND WEST KENT COLLEGE	£10,213,862	£582,456	£10,796,318	£8,405,350	-£2,390,968	£9,806,480	£1,401,130	14%
THE COLLEGE OF HARINGEY, ENFIELD AND NORTH EAST LONDON	£23,875,018	£1,512,575	£25,387,593	£23,854,581	-£1,533,012	£25,149,611	£1,295,030	5%
HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE	£5,093,946	£1,156,860	£6,250,806	£4,095,753	-£2,155,053	£5,353,368	£1,257,615	23%
BARNSELY COLLEGE	£4,350,219	£2,749,657	£7,099,876	£4,786,203	-£2,313,673	£6,041,833	£1,255,630	21%
SOUTH NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE	£22,312,597	£2,495,070	£24,807,667	£22,999,729	-£1,807,938	£24,233,889	£1,234,160	5%
CORNWALL COLLEGE	£14,163,869	£523,875	£14,687,744	£12,776,401	-£1,911,343	£13,928,465	£1,152,064	8%
LEICESTER COLLEGE	£21,233,470	£519,179	£21,752,649	£20,746,063	-£1,006,586	£21,845,928	£1,099,865	5%
GLOUCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE	£9,322,744	£237,520	£9,560,264	£7,796,118	-£1,764,146	£8,865,536	£1,069,418	12%
DERBY COLLEGE	£15,823,442	£1,652,089	£17,475,531	£16,068,211	-£1,407,320	£17,053,959	£985,748	6%
TOWER HAMLETS COLLEGE	£10,303,287	£61,993	£10,365,280	£9,553,832	-£811,448	£10,526,870	£973,038	9%
CITY COLLEGE, PLYMOUTH	£8,301,369	£204,115	£8,505,484	£6,874,169	-£1,631,315	£7,842,836	£968,667	12%
DONCASTER COLLEGE	£9,031,684	£15,843	£9,047,527	£7,344,221	-£1,703,306	£8,268,936	£924,715	11%
EAST BERKSHIRE COLLEGE	£9,102,333	£257,826	£9,360,159	£7,198,864	-£2,161,295	£8,093,722	£894,858	11%
KNOWSLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	£6,556,168	£549,093	£7,105,261	£5,542,728	-£1,562,533	£6,400,274	£857,546	13%
BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL	£12,274,783	£735,563	£13,010,346	£11,687,488	-£1,322,858	£12,542,509	£855,021	7%
TRURO AND PENWITH COLLEGE	£5,083,551	£680,834	£5,764,385	£4,254,699	-£1,509,686	£5,097,430	£842,731	17%
KIRKLEES COLLEGE	£13,174,470	-£301,717	£12,872,753	£12,203,220	-£669,533	£13,015,812	£812,592	6%
CITY OF BRISTOL COLLEGE	£20,025,393	£584,734	£20,610,127	£20,191,621	-£418,506	£20,986,585	£794,964	4%
OXFORD AND CHERWELL VALLEY COLLEGE	£13,179,510	£689,777	£13,869,287	£12,994,487	-£874,800	£13,781,309	£786,822	6%
BARNET AND SOUTHGATE COLLEGE	£15,751,353	£99,656	£15,851,009	£21,602,763	£5,751,754	£22,374,137	£771,374	3%
NEW COLLEGE, DURHAM	£5,838,469	£1,740,628	£7,579,097	£6,327,798	-£1,251,299	£7,071,366	£743,568	11%
WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE	£6,516,069	£153,017	£6,669,086	£5,310,430	-£1,358,656	£6,037,177	£726,747	12%
THE MANCHESTER COLLEGE	£28,335,165	£3,553,050	£31,888,215	£31,972,451	£84,236	£32,693,357	£720,906	2%
CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE	£12,646,679	£1,166,939	£13,813,618	£12,753,957	-£1,059,661	£13,461,977	£708,020	5%
EALING, HAMMERSMITH & WEST LONDON COLLEGE	£20,711,601	£2,059,756	£22,771,357	£22,226,992	-£544,365	£22,933,635	£706,643	3%
COLCHESTER INSTITUTE	£5,844,157	£1,019,018	£6,863,175	£5,680,215	-£1,182,960	£6,381,096	£700,881	11%
LEEDS CITY COLLEGE	£31,313,733	£2,554,686	£33,868,419	£32,989,212	-£879,207	£33,683,702	£694,490	2%
OAKLANDS COLLEGE	£6,799,787	£719,408	£7,519,195	£6,428,511	-£1,090,684	£7,098,754	£670,243	9%
UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON	£5,015,287	-£628,352	£4,386,935	£3,245,131	-£1,141,804	£3,887,395	£642,264	17%
TYNE METROPOLITAN COLLEGE	£5,080,559	£146,760	£5,227,319	£4,085,636	-£1,141,683	£4,724,828	£639,192	14%
BROMLEY COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	£8,266,234	£138,648	£8,404,882	£7,703,455	-£701,427	£8,326,636	£623,181	7%
ROTHERHAM COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	£7,261,040	£644,066	£7,905,106	£6,853,946	-£1,051,160	£7,467,049	£613,103	8%
COLLEGE OF NORTH WEST LONDON	£15,670,499	£646,559	£16,317,058	£15,649,904	-£667,154	£16,260,834	£610,930	4%
NEWHAM COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	£21,315,225	£3,118,540	£24,433,765	£24,151,092	-£282,673	£24,756,055	£604,963	2%
GUILDFORD COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	£7,726,695	£72,408	£7,799,103	£6,757,253	-£1,041,850	£7,345,058	£587,805	8%
NORTH EAST WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE	£5,234,654	£519,794	£5,754,448	£4,750,476	-£1,003,972	£5,321,663	£571,187	11%
CHICHESTER COLLEGE	£9,001,939	£943,318	£9,945,257	£9,034,498	-£910,759	£9,601,870	£567,372	6%
BRENT LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL	£4,374,311	£21,720	£4,396,031	£3,919,702	-£476,329	£4,486,553	£566,851	13%
CITY COLLEGE, NORWICH	£5,749,612	£143,996	£5,893,608	£4,813,260	-£1,080,348	£5,377,257	£563,997	10%
WALSALL COLLEGE	£8,679,792	£935,192	£9,614,984	£8,787,105	-£827,879	£9,346,240	£559,135	6%
SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	*	n/a	£9,318,424	£8,347,270	-£971,154	£8,898,485	£551,215	6%
STOCKTON RIVERSIDE COLLEGE	£5,033,268	£285,607	£5,318,875	£4,432,609	-£886,266	£4,971,250	£538,641	11%
CITY COLLEGE, COVENTRY	£5,397,131	£209,181	£5,606,312	£4,893,059	-£713,253	£5,427,591	£534,532	10%
STOURBRIDGE COLLEGE	£8,750,760	£913,394	£9,664,154	£8,943,025	-£721,129	£9,474,070	£531,045	6%
NEW COLLEGE NOTTINGHAM	£13,937,751	£1,699,027	£15,636,778	£15,415,844	-£220,934	£15,920,825	£504,981	3%
TELFORD COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY	£19,851,450	£176,974	£20,028,424	£19,458,123	-£570,301	£19,958,260	£500,137	3%

*Provider awaiting final confirmation of their allocation

COLUMN KEY

- A Skills Funding Agency Allocations 2011/12 as at 1 August 2011. Using funding categories in column D and E. See: <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/>
- B In-year allocation increase or decrease. Column C less column A
- C Skills Funding Agency Allocations 2011/12 as at 29 June 2012. Using funding categories in column D and E. See: <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/>
- D Adult Skills Total Delivered, in the Skills Funding Agency Final Claims 2011/12 document. <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/>
- E Under-delivery. Column D less column C
- F Adult Skills Total Funded, in the Skills Funding Agency Final Claims 2011/12 document. <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/>
- G Overpaid £. Column F less column D
- H Overpaid %. Column G divided by column F

FE Week campus round-up

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Best boot forward for footie star’s career



Sunderland College student Jack Stanger, 18

A young footballer says his selection to play for England Colleges is the “best birthday” present that his father could have asked for.

Jack Stanger, 18, from Sunderland, received the news on his father’s birthday. “When I got the call to tell me I had been selected I was ecstatic,” he said. “It was the best present my Dad could have asked for.”

The centre midfielder fought off competition from hundreds of young hopefuls to be selected for the team, which will travel to Italy later this year for an international tournament.

He is studying a diploma in sport development, coaching and fitness at Sunderland College’s football development centre. “The college has been a massive help in my development as a footballer and I owe them a big thank you for all their great support,” he said.

“It really does feel like a dream come true. The selection motivates me to continue to impress until I reach my ultimate goal of winning a professional contract. I am hoping that there will be scouts from top clubs at the games looking for new talent. To play football professionally would be the ultimate achievement for me.”

Empty shop full of inspiration for art students



Mature student Lou Gilmore-George from Cleveland College of art & design with her Artists Book sculpture, inspired by camping

Young designers in Durham took over a city centre shop to display sculpture, ceramics, textiles and jewellery.

Applied arts for enterprise students at Cleveland College of Art & Design (CCAD) staged a mini-exhibition at the former Durham City visitor centre as part of a project to make creative use of vacant premises.

They spent two months creating their ‘Artist’s Book’ exhibits, making visual interpretations of their final dissertations.

Mature student Lou Gilmore-George, 34, of Richmond (pictured), exhibited copper sculpture inspired by camping. She said: “It’s been a really sharp learning curve creating an exhibition from scratch, but much more of a real life experience.

“Not only did we have to design and create the exhibits, we were also responsible for planning the space, lighting and marketing using social networking channels.

“The idea behind Empty Shop is so creative and having my work exhibited in the centre of Durham is incredible.”

The scheme was co-ordinated by arts group Empty Shop and Durham County Council to give artists a platform in prime locations.



Sam Hutchinson, Jake Solman-Wood and Mathew Clayton from Carshalton College have been successful in making it through to the London heat of a chef challenge

Three young chefs find a recipe for success

Three catering students from Surrey have made it through the first stages of a competition for young chefs.

Sam Hutchinson, Jake Solman-Wood, both 19, and Mathew Clayton, 18, from Carshalton College, are now in the London heats of the 2012/13 Brakes Student Chef Team Challenge.

The hospitality and catering students created a meal for four of goat’s cheese filo tart and quince poached in red wine, followed by a main of pan-seared duck with seasonal greens, pancetta, a celeriac and parsnip puree and redcurrant jus.

The last course was deep fried pasta with a mango and passion fruit mousse.

The aspiring chefs submitted details of how they would prepare each course and the costs, working to a budget of £10 a head.

“They worked really hard on coming up with an impressive three-course meal and we are all delighted they have made it through to the next round,” said Tom Hall, Carshalton’s catering team leader.

The London heats will be held on January 26.

Top colours for former Leicester students



Sarah Harris and Louise Davis, former Leicester College students, have qualified as Wella Master Colour Experts

Two young midland stylists have been awarded a top hairdressing qualification.

Louise Davis, 24, and Sarah Harris, 21, who both work at Tanya Harris Hairdressing in Leicester, recently qualified as Wella Master Colour Experts.

The duo, who have been studying with Wella at their state-of-the-art studio in London for the past year, now join a small group of stylists in the UK who hold the award.

Salon owner Tanya said: “The Wella programme is known throughout the hairdressing industry as one of the best colour courses available. The knowledge that Louise and Sarah have gained is immense and will be a huge benefit to the salon.

“They put a tremendous amount of hard work and effort into it and we are so proud of them both.”

Sarah and Louise both gained qualifications at Leicester College where Sarah won apprentice of the year in 2010 and Louise won student of the year in 2007.

The instructors at Wella were so impressed with the stylists’ work that they intend to use their portfolios to help teach future students.

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable

Bright spark takes top apprentice award



College of North West London apprentice Gianni Chambers scoops top prize and is presented his JTL award on HMS Belfast from JTL chief executive Denis Hird

A London student has scooped the top prize at an awards ceremony for JTL electrical apprentices.

Gianni Chambers, 21, was named the capital's best apprentice at the training charity's London Regional Awards for electrical installation. The ceremony was held on HMS Belfast.

As well as being handed a trophy by Denis Hird, JTL's chief executive, the College of North West London student was also presented with £700.

"You get out of an apprenticeship only what you put in ... and the harder you work the more

you receive," said Gianni.

"I am incredibly pleased with my award and am proud of what I've achieved so far, but am mindful that where I am is not the end but the beginning. I am very grateful to those that have helped along the way."

Gianni has studied electronics, welding environmental technology and, currently, a BTec level four HNC diploma in building services engineering at North West London. He has been at the college for four years.

Pat Leavey, technology head of faculty, said: "Gianni has high aspirations and is extremely conscientious. He'll go far."



Coleg Gwent students in the Black Mountains

Gruelling three-day trek ends in success

Outdoor activity students in Wales took their first steps towards becoming walk leaders after a gruelling training expedition.

Second-year students at Coleg Gwent's Usk campus, training for a sports leader L3 BELA award, covered a 45km route in the Black Mountains from Monmouth to Hay-on Wye.

The group spent two weeks planning the trek and carried food, clothes and camping equipment for their three-day expedition. They braved chilly temperatures camping out overnight and were tested to the max, showing their leadership skills to navigate the safest routes through bad weather conditions.

"The ground was wet, the winds were high and the nights were cold. Students showed skill, judgment and fantastic team morale," said David Windebank, an outdoor activity lecturer.

"Each person showed what is needed from an instructor who plans to work in the outdoor industry, and I look forward to finishing the training course with them."

The BTec extended diploma sport (outdoor activity) students are now working towards their final assessed three-day expedition to complete the training for the sports leader award.



Olympic cyclist Lucy Martin (centre) with students from left Matthew McCormick, Amy Lynne Wright, both 17, Tara Jones and Hollie Bousfield, both 16

Olympian wheels into her former college

Olympic cyclist Lucy Martin went back to her roots when she dropped in on a Cheshire college.

Lucy talked to sport students at Cronton Sixth-Form College, where she studied A levels four years ago, about the commitment and training required to compete at the highest level.

"It was great to go back and see all the fantastic new facilities and new practices the sports department has to offer students," she said.

"It was lovely to talk to the students and answer all of their questions. I hope I have

managed to inspire and to encourage them to follow their sporting dreams."

She said when she was a student at Cronton, she adapted her timetable to fit in with her training. "All that hard work and support paid off," she added.

Hollie Bousfield, a national taekwondo champion who is studying a diploma in sport development and fitness at the college, said: "It was brilliant to be able to speak to Lucy and find out exactly what it takes to get to the top of your sport. I'll be taking all of the advice on board and hope that it will help me follow in Lucy's footsteps."



South Cheshire College chemistry student Heidi Falvey, 18, with the University of Manchester's Stephen Worrall analysing paracetamol

Taking a closer look at paracetamol

Young chemists in Crewe spent a day testing the purity of paracetamol, using an infra-red spectrometer and thin layer chromatography techniques.

Two groups of A level chemistry students, including Heidi Falvey, 18, (pictured), took part in 'spectroscopy in a suitcase' workshops at South Cheshire College.

The sessions were delivered by postgraduate students from the University of Manchester's chemistry department through the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Dr Katayune Presland, the north west regional co-ordinator for the Royal Society of Chemistry, who helped to deliver the workshops, said: "The infra-red spectroscopy equipment is very expensive and is used by students at the University of Manchester.

"All the students responded well and we look forward to working with the college again in the future."

Andrew Knott, a chemistry tutor at South Cheshire, said: "Visits like these give students the chance to use equipment they don't have access to at college. We are grateful to the society - the students have benefited greatly from these sessions."

FE Week campus round-up

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Leeds City College dance students

Dance performance at Royal Armouries

A Yorkshire war museum was brought to life when dance students re-enacted a 16th century European battle.

The performance at the Royal Armouries was inspired by the Battle of Pavia and choreographed by Briony Marston, a dance tutor at Leeds City College.

“It was challenging for the students to adapt to a non-traditional performance space and think about complex sight lines, as well as risk and limitations. They also rehearsed when the gallery was open to the public, which again brought challenges,” she said.

Technical students also got involved, installing a large sound system in the gallery.

Kate Humble, visitor experience manager at the Royal Armouries, said: “The college produced a dance piece that beautifully and dramatically interacted with the war gallery with organic ease.”

Ms Marston began working on the project last January when she submitted a planning proposal to the Royal Armouries. Robin Lee, a London-based musician and producer, composed the music for the piece.

Stellar opportunity for space engineers

Future space stars took a trip to the House of Commons to rub shoulders with scientists.

Twelve students from Loughborough College’s space engineering programme for pupils aged over 16, the first in the country, gave a demonstration to Science Minister David Willetts and heard from Professor Brian Cox on the importance of space education.

Anu Ojha, director of education at the National Space Academy and a teacher on the course, said: “This is a very special group of students who have been chosen for a unique course. They have access to personnel and equipment at the college and the National Space Centre that would be the envy of any sixth-former. There are some incredibly exciting opportunities ahead of them in a dynamic industry.”

The reception was hosted by the parliamentary space committee. Phillip Lee, its executive vice-chair, said: “It is clear that space has a key and growing role, both in inspiring and lifting the aspirations of young people and in boosting the skills base needed for the UK’s knowledge-driven economy.

“This unique and innovative course provides an exciting pathway to further study and to industry, and addresses the country’s urgent need for more engineers and scientists.”



Student Cameron Olivier assists with a demonstration at the Parliamentary Space Committee's House of Commons reception

Students lay foundations for the future



Construction students with staff and pupils at North Wheatley Primary School

Midland construction students have been transforming neglected land into a play area for local schoolchildren.

North Nottinghamshire College students built a log cabin for environmental work and a pond for North Wheatley Primary School. Future plans include a lookout tower, an area for den building, a play tunnel and a range of outdoor musical instruments made from reclaimed materials.

“Most of the young people on the programme have come to college having been out of education for some time and have returned to learn valuable vocational and life skills,” said Mick Putland, a college project worker.

“This project has enabled them to practise their construction skills and has increased their employability skills by giving them the opportunity to gain experience of construction in the field.”

Joanna Hall, North Wheatley’s headteacher, said: “It will all make such a difference to our pupils. We are extremely privileged to have the opportunity of developing such great community spirit by working closely with the college.”

Student photographer snaps up award



From left: One of Joel’s award winning photos and him receiving his award from Sir Michael Parkinson at the NCTJ skills conference Nottingham in November (Picture by Steve Phillips)

A photojournalist has won a national award after capturing the reality of Britain’s drinking culture.

Joel Goodman clinched the student image of the year in the National Council for the Training of Journalists’ (NCTJ) awards for excellence after snatching images outside a popular Manchester nightclub of passed-out revellers, fights, and paramedics and police at work.

The 36-year-old, who just completed a press photography and journalism course at Norton College, part of The Sheffield College, was presented his accolade by veteran broadcaster Sir Michael Parkinson.

Joel said: “I’m chuffed to bits. It’s really flattering to have won this award. The course has been great. It has a strong reputation, being highly regarded among most press photographers and has provided a terrific opportunity for me.”

Andrew Cropley, Norton’s principal, congratulated Joel on his “fantastic success”.

The Sheffield College is one of only two colleges nationally offering the NCTJ-accredited press photography and photojournalism qualification.

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Jolly Dollies try their hand at DIY

FEATURED
CAMPUS
ROUND-UP

A group of savvy widows have mastered power drilling and car mechanics at college after realising they couldn't use their husbands' toolkits.

Social group The Jolly Dollies, founded by Yvonne Vann, has been trying out DIY — plaster boarding and putting up shelves — during taster courses at Weston College's Construction and Engineering Centre of Excellence (CECE) in Somerset.

Former legal secretary Janet McArdle decided she and her friends needed a helping hand on the DIY front.

The 67-year-old from Weston, said: "Most of us are widows and we've all got these tools but don't know how to use them properly. I used to help my husband but more in terms of holding up a shelf while he drilled — I wish I'd taken a bit more notice now.

"I tried putting up a bird box at home but got confused which size of screw to use."

Lecturer Matt Postins, who is also the regional chairman of the Guild of Bricklayers, said: "It's been great to teach them the delights of cordless drilling.

"It's not about complicated DIY but having a go at basic tasks. Hopefully, after trying these skills the ladies can save the money they may have had to pay to a builder."

CECE construction service leader, Steve Caldwell, said the taster days meant people could have a go at a practical session and if they enjoyed the activity then they could look at other courses at Weston College.

"Janet's request was unique so we listened



The Jolly Dollies tooling up in Weston-super-Mare. From left: Cherrie Broomfield, Pauline Luck, Trish Cogle, Sonia Fry, Betty Phillis, Janet McArdle and Brenda Howie

to what the ladies hoped to gain from the session and ran a tailor-made afternoon", he said.

Since their initial session the women have also taken on car mechanics.

Yvonne started the Jolly Dollies after losing her husband Victor to Multiple System Atrophy (MSA), a rare neurological disease.

"Two years after he died I met up with a woman called June Owens who was in a very similar situation to me," said the 65-year-old.

"We started to go out occasionally and one night we realised there must be so many women out there in the same social situation as us."

That was the start of the Jolly Dollies and two years later there are 15 who meet up for dinners, lunches, quizzes as well as going to the theatre and dancing.

"I can't tell you how difficult it is for women to pick up their social lives after the loss of their partner in life," said Yvonne.

"What the Jolly Dollies have is a unique understanding of how each other feels and what we have all gone through.

"The one-day courses at Weston College have been good fun. For some widows these courses will be really useful because a lot of husbands did all the house DIY and simple jobs on the car, now we can do it for ourselves."

She now wants to expand the Jolly Dollies concept nationally and even internationally.



Painting and decorating students from Barking & Dagenham College with the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor Anthony Ramsay and Councillor Jeanne Alexander

Barking & Dagenham models on parade

London students won a mayoral seal of approval when they created scale models of the capital's landmarks for a float.

Carpentry, painting and decorating students from Barking & Dagenham College made replicas of the Shard, the Gherkin, Tower Bridge, the Millennium Wheel and Tower 42 at Canary Wharf for London's New Year's Day parade.

Anthony Ramsay, the borough mayor, and Jeanne Alexander, mayoress, gave the students just 10 days' notice before they popped into the college to look over the iconic creations.

"The mayor inspected the models and expressed his gratitude and said that the students' work was to 'a very high standard'," said Tony Carruthers, the college's curriculum manager for building crafts.

"They have done a great job and we are very proud of what they have achieved."

Each building was completed to scale with each other, ranging from 7ft for the Shard to 3ft for Tower Bridge. The carpentry students also made a telephone box and postbox as well as giant gold, silver and bronze Olympic medals in wood.

Beauty therapy students go head to head



Twelve entrants from across Kent competed in a make-up event at the new Salon Academy at East Kent College

Beauty therapy students from across Kent showcased their make-up skills at a new salon academy.

East Kent College hosted a competition for 12 students to transform a model using the theme of fantasy or fashion catwalk. The contest lasted three hours.

Four East Kent students joined K College, Canterbury College and MidKent College students to impress a panel of judges that included make-up artists, hairdressers, former students and Jillian Silverthorne from the Vocational Training Charitable Trust (VTCT).

Tarron Pearson, a make-up artist and judge, said: "This competition has been an

inspiration for the region — we've been very impressed by the standard we've seen so early in the academic year, and the facilities are fantastic."

East Kent swept the board in the fantasy class, with Ebony Barks taking top prize and fellow students Charlotte Huntley, Faye-Marie Ball and Oceana Lucas all highly commended.

In the fashion catwalk category, Sofia Eljeaich of MidKent won the fashion catwalk; Emma-Jane Grieve, also of MidKent, was highly commended.

Martin Newman, business manager of the competition sponsor City & Guilds, presented the prizes.

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the learner is at the heart of everything we do. You will also play a pivotal role in strengthening and developing our work with employers and other partners. With extensive leadership and management experience, you will have a successful track record of leading and

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Candidates should be innovative and pro-active in their approach to delivering high quality teaching to our learners.

Applications must be made on line by 15 January 2013 (11 January for Teacher in Maths). Please visit www.nescot.ac.uk and follow the links to "Working at Nescot".



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Head of Business Apprenticeships, reporting to the Regional Director, Manchester based.

You will be responsible for the continuing growth and delivery of a suite of Apprenticeships across sectors including Business and Administration, Customer Services, and Financial Services; you will come with proven experience in one or more of these sectors.

You will provide leadership and strategic direction to a dedicated team of managers, assessors and support staff and will work very closely with the Business Development Director on employer engagement. You will demonstrate sound commercial acumen, budgetary control and financial management, and have the skills to engage at a senior level with stakeholders and employers ensuring that challenging growth and delivery targets are met. You will report directly to the Senior Leadership Team of Kaplan UK.

As a successful Senior Manager, you will be fully conversant with the world of work based learning either within a private training provider or a college environment, and will demonstrate experience of the funding, compliance and quality landscape of the Adult Skills Budget, specifically Apprenticeships.

If you are interested in the role, please send your CV and a covering letter to louise.timperley@kaplan.co.uk by the deadline of midday on **Monday 14 January 2013**.



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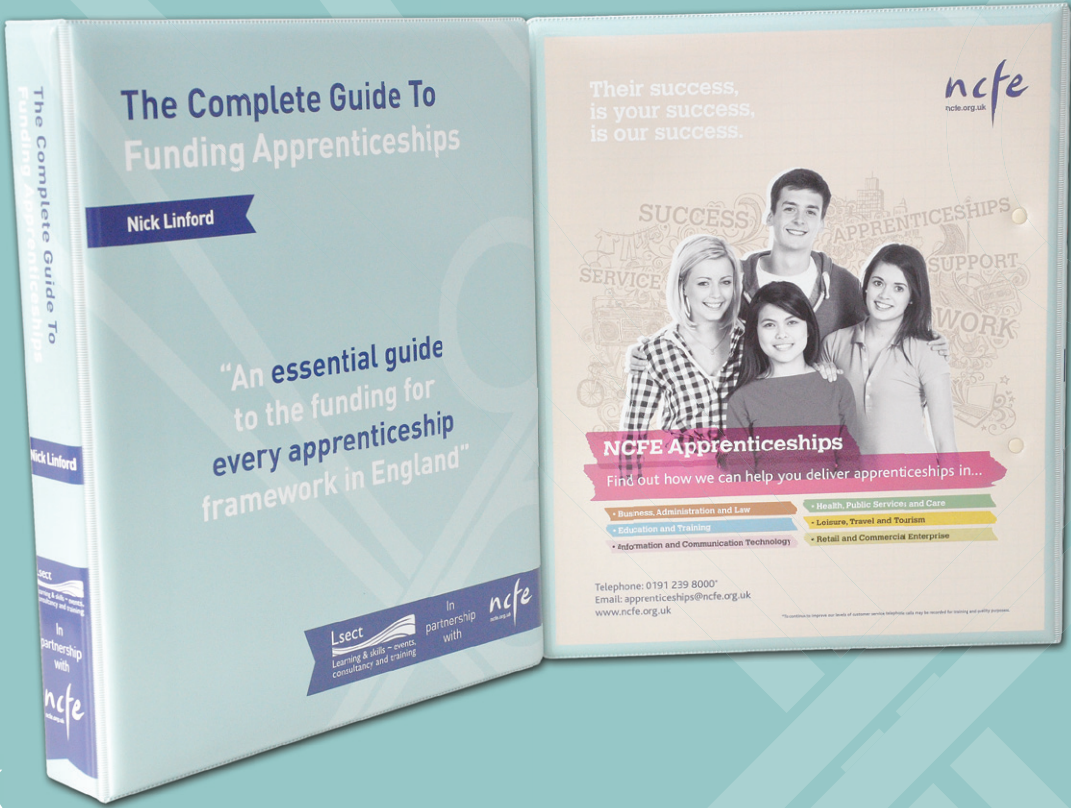


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Updated to include new functional skills rates

FE Week Sudoku challenge

			7	9			3	1
6					5	9		
	1	2		4		8	7	
		1	8				6	
5	4		6		9		8	2
	9				3	5		
	3	8		7		1	5	
		4	2					3
7	6			3	1			

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

3			9					
	9			4				
				5	8	1		
		6			5			7
2		5	8		3	9		4
7			2			3		
		2	7	3				
				2			4	
					4			5

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

9	1	3	6	8	5	4	2	7
8	2	5	7	1	4	9	3	6
6	4	7	9	2	3	8	5	1
2	9	6	3	5	8	7	1	4
3	8	1	2	4	7	5	6	9
7	5	4	1	9	6	3	8	2
5	6	8	4	7	1	2	9	9
1	7	2	5	3	9	6	4	8
4	3	9	8	6	2	1	7	5

Difficulty:
EASY

9	7	2	3	5	6	4	1	8
4	5	3	2	8	1	9	7	6
6	8	1	9	4	7	2	5	3
3	2	6	8	9	5	1	4	7
1	4	7	6	2	3	8	9	5
8	9	5	7	1	4	3	6	2
5	6	9	4	3	8	7	2	1
2	1	8	5	7	9	6	3	4
7	3	4	1	6	2	5	8	9

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I've been bouncing around in the garden"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter [@daniellinford](https://twitter.com/daniellinford)